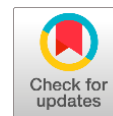


Dental tourism in Albania - A study that explores the factors that attract foreign tourists to benefit from dental services in Albania



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Abstract Tourism is an important and influential sector for the economy, creating multiple uses and benefits. Dental tourism as part of tourism as a whole has seen an increase all over the world. People are traveling from their countries to get dental treatment at a much lower cost and in a much shorter time than in their own countries. Even in Albania, dental tourism has had an increasing number of foreigners looking for dental clinics for their oral health. This study explores the factors that attract foreign (Italian) tourists to benefit from dental services in Albania. For data collection, 100 questionnaires addressed to dental tourists (Italian) are used, in the form of an interview as a structured conversation, where the dental assistant asks questions and the dental tourist gives answers, during the period January-September 2023. Through the descriptive analysis, we obtained an overview of the characteristics of the sample under study according to the data of the structured questionnaire, respectively: The first part (sociodemographic characteristics), the second part (dental factors), (price, quality, promotion, of dental services), (opinions on tourism in Albania). One of the main strengths of this study is the focus on dental tourism, which has not been studied very much in Albania. The study will have a modest impact on those responsible for the development of the tourism industry by making them aware of the factors that motivate foreigners to travel to Albania. In conclusion, Albania is now a favorite destination for many tourists who can get the necessary dental care while also creating unforgettable memories.

Keywords: dental tourism, dental tourist, dental services, tourist attraction, tourist behavior, economic impact

1. Introduction

Tourism constitutes an important and influential sector for the economy, creating multiple uses and benefits. Many countries around the world are developing dental tourism as a major growing segment of medical tourism. People travel from their own countries to receive dental treatment at a much lower cost and in a much shorter time than in their countries. Dental tourism provides patients with the opportunity to reduce the high costs of dental procedures on the one hand and to use the time between dental visits on the other hand to travel and explore new destinations. People travel from their countries to receive dental treatment at a much lower cost and in a much shorter time than in their own countries. The reason is the constant increase in health care prices in countries where dental care is not always free. As a result, dental tourism has become very popular in certain countries that offer affordable services without compromising quality. People from the United States and Canada often travel to Mexico or fly to Costa Rica, Middle Easterners go to India and Thailand, while the British and Italians prefer Hungary or Albania for a more Mediterranean atmosphere. In addition, medical tourism, especially dental tourism, is flourishing in Albania. The country has gained attention, as other destinations in the region, such as Croatia, have started offering greater fares. Furthermore, Albanians living abroad represent a significant portion of people coming to Albania for dental procedures. Over the years, word of mouth and professional dental tourism have created a strong offering that serves international patients from European countries, especially from Italy and England. This study started with the idea that dental tourism is treated very little in Albania. However, even in the last 15 years, this tourism has increased annually. Our review of the literature revealed the theoretical concepts of medical tourism in general and of dental tourism in particular. The purpose of this research was to understand dental tourism in Albania from the point of view of those seeking dental services and to identify the factors that attract foreigners to choose different clinics in Albania. Tourism is always related to human beings and human nature, so it is important to research why people travel and analyze their tourism experiences. The research question, which aims to help realize the purpose and objectives of this research, is as follows: What are the factors that attract foreigners to choose different clinics in Albania? For data collection, 100 questionnaires addressed to dental tourists (Italian) were used in the form of an interview as a structured conversation where the dental assistant asked questions and the dental tourist provided answers during the period of January-September 2023. The questions are divided into five categories.



The first category of the interview included some of the most important elements, and sociodemographic characteristics (age, education, country of origin) were recorded together with personal factors (income, employment

The second category of interviews has to do with the question "the purpose of traveling to Albania". The question examines why foreign patients choose an Albanian clinic versus a clinic in another country. The next question is why the patient decided to go to the chosen clinic and where they found the clinic.

After that, patients will be asked if the clinic offered them any packages and, if so, what the nature of the deal was and if they took up that offer.

The third category of the interview has to do with the question "service at the destination", where investigates the type of treatments the patient received. Moreover, satisfaction is considered one of the most important factors of the tourist experience, especially for service providers in the healthcare industry, who are better than their competitors. Therefore, the next proposed question will be how satisfied the patients were with the service. Following the question, have you learned more about Albania during your visits here as an element of satisfaction to get to know new places?

The fourth category of the interview addresses the question "impression of the treatment". Taking satisfaction into consideration, if satisfaction is achieved, there is a high probability that the client will return, which is why the first question is whether the patient plans to return to Albania for further dental treatments and, if so, when. The next question is whether the tourist recommended the clinic to family, friends or others after the dental intervention. For Albania, word-of-mouth recommendations are particularly important.

This is one of the main sources of information on which foreign patients usually find Albanian dentists.

In addition, the challenges the patient encountered during the visit (if any) and what the clinic could have done differently to improve the treatment experience will be analyzed.

The findings show that the identity of the Albanian market is mainly based on the excellent price-quality ratio of products and services in dental care. staff competence, high professional standards, lower prices and quality of support services. The findings also highlight that Albania should build competitive advantages in providing dental services with tourism experience as a product. The quality of supporting tourist facilities in Albania adds value to the basic product and helps differentiate it from the competition. This study will have a modest impact on those responsible for the development of the tourism industry by making them aware of the importance of dental tourism in Albania. It is hoped that the results of this study will serve the providers of tourism products and services to approach this market, developing appropriate marketing programs to promote their products and services effectively to dental tourists. This area is a favorite destination for many tourists who can obtain the necessary dental care while also creating unforgettable memories.

2. Literature Review

Tourism is one of the largest, most profitable and most dynamic sectors of the world economy. The successful development of tourism has an impact on key sectors of the economy, such as trade, construction, agriculture, transport and communication, and the production of consumer goods. The creation of a developed tourism industry is of great importance as an effective direction for economic development. Due to its rapid growth, tourism has been recognized as an economic phenomenon of the last century, and a bright future is predicted for it in the next century. The development of tourism is conceptualized and analyzed in the context and influence of the laws of the market economy. "Tourism can play an important role, especially in terms of issues related to extreme poverty and hunger, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnership" (World Travel & Tourism, 2013). The main motivation for host countries, especially developing countries, is to generate economic benefits and sustainable employment opportunities for local communities. Sustainable employment opportunities are critical, especially in countries that depend on tourism as a major economic sector. "Directly, tourism generates jobs through hotels, restaurants, night clubs, taxis and selling souvenirs. Indirectly, the industry creates employment through the supply of goods and services needed for tourism-related businesses" (UNEP, 2001). Tourism acts as an export industry that generates new income from external sources. "A host nation will gain exchange with foreigners, which will contribute to improving the nation's balance of payments. Tourism reduces unemployment by creating new job opportunities. The increase in demand for tourism encourages new investments in communication infrastructure and transportation options" (Liu, J.C. et al., 1987). Tourists are seen as the main element in the tourism industry. "It is important to know who they are, why they travel and what they expect during their trips to destinations" (Cook, R. A., et al. 2002).

Tourist trips and the need for tourist products and services have become necessary for modern society. The tourist experiences that accompany the individual on trips condition their choices in a certain way. Understanding the behavior of tourists is important for making marketing activity more successful. "The market can currently be characterized as a very competitive environment, in which the attractive offer of a tourist destination includes and possesses information about the reasons that lead a tourist to a certain destination, the activities performed by tourists in this destination and the degree of satisfaction obtained from the product offered" (Jang, S., Feng, R. 2007).

Medical tourism "is a term that describes the search for medical treatment in another country" (Barrowman, R. A., et al. 2010) and is defined as "the process of leaving home for treatment and care abroad" (Deloitte, 2008). Medical tourism is a relatively new phenomenon (Badulescu, D., Badulescu, A., 2014) and is considered to be "the most important component of

trade in health services" (OECD, 2011). "The number of people who travel for medical purposes is difficult to calculate" (Jamie, L.W., 2016). Medical tourism, especially dental tourism, as part of tourism as a whole, has seen an increase worldwide.

The definition and meaning of (Market Business, 2020) Dental tourism, born in recent decades, is a branch of medical tourism and is considered its largest subsector. Traveling abroad for dental treatment is said to be "the most widespread form of medical tourism" (Lovelock, B. et al., 2018). Dental tourism is a growing and developing phenomenon (Asai, R.G., et al. 2007) that is becoming more attractive to a number of patients due to reduced costs, convenience and immediacy in treatment (Barrowman, R.A., et al. 2010). People choose to travel to other countries to receive the same dental services but at a lower price. The first individuals to start this movement were Americans and Canadians who went to receive dental treatment in Mexico, Costa Rica and Peru. Australians traveled to Thailand and India. Currently, Italians go to Croatia in large numbers, using it for summer vacations. Another important aspect of dental tourism around the world is the high percentage of total dental tourists who are expatriates. In the US, 17% of immigrants (namely, Latino immigrants) received medical care in a foreign country.

Another definition by Judit Zoltan and Rico Maggi: Dental tourism (Zoltan, J., Maggi, R.) is an important segment of the growing health tourism industry. Patients generate relevant tourism income for the destination country beyond the direct income of dental clinics. According to Dr. Ahmed Havva (2021), who has 20 years of experience in the field of dental aesthetics, with the addition of an unbalanced and unhealthy diet, along with industrialization and urbanization, the health of people and the public has recently started to deteriorate, and health problems have started to appear. Therefore, people have started using other methods to protect their health or solve health problems. People's health problems and needs are similar in all countries, regardless of geographic region.

With recent technological developments, the increase in the freedom of travel of individuals, the facilitation of transportation, the provision of health services in different regions of the world and the change in financial opportunities according to region have been the greatest factors in the emergence of the concept of health tourism. From the 1900s to the present day, health tourism has continued to develop and change under similar conditions and is becoming more vibrant and active every year. Dental tourism has grown by 10 to 15 percent annually, according to a study published by the PWC in 2017. The trend has been growing since 2013 when a new EU directive allowed patients to receive treatment in a member state and then claim the cost if it was covered by the national health care scheme.

General information for countries with developed dental tourism:

- Spain: British, Irish and German tourists flock to Spain for their dental treatment. Even Americans who want a brighter smile have been known to go there rather than pay the exorbitant fees back home. The dental market in Spain is known for its quality and affordability. It may not be as cheap as Poland and Hungary, but the perceived difference in quality makes up for the slight price difference. At the same time, patients have the opportunity to receive sunlight.

- Thailand: Thailand has the best dental facilities in the world—some large and many extremely modern facilities. Australians and New Zealanders, in particular, make up much of the large number of patients who attend dental clinics in Thailand. However, so are Canada and America. Most dentists in Thailand have trained abroad before returning to their home country to practice, and many choose to finance their own clinic.

- Turkey: Tourists from the east and west travel to Turkey to take advantage of the low-cost, high-quality dental treatment they offer there. The Turkish government is one of the most proactive in promoting medical tourism, and it is also planning to create tax-free (VAT-free) healthcare zones for foreign medical tourists. Dentists in Turkey are known for their international-level training, making them some of the most skilled practitioners in the world. There is a wide range of impressive orthodontic and cosmetic dentistry clinics to choose from.

- Mexico: Americans flock to Mexico for dental treatment – it is many times less expensive than in their own country. In addition, for border states such as Texas and California, it is not hard at all to think about (a short plane ride to Cancun or Puerto Vallarta is no problem). Dental care in Mexico is excellent. It is less expensive than in America because dentists in Mexico – unlike their American counterparts – do not have to pay for malpractice insurance. The cost of living is lower, and there is less student debt.

- Croatia: This region has a lower price for comparable dental work in Western countries. Dentist prices in Croatia are up to 70% less expensive than those in the UK.

- Albania: On the other hand, Albanian dental tourism is flourishing. Compared to Croatia, our main focus was Italian patients.

According to a study performed by Mr. Shivayogim, Hugar Awards are valued as follows ([Shivayogim Hugar](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280135214)<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280135214> The business and pleasure of teeth Dental tourism):

2.1. Dental tourism in Albania

Currently, people from developed countries such as Italy, France, Switzerland and others travel to developing countries, such as Albania, for high-quality dental services but at a lower cost than in other countries. Other factors are the long waiting time and the speed of obtaining dental services. Some tourists visit Albania not only for dental services but also for the natural

beauty of this wonderful country. Dental tourism includes all activities related to traveling from your place of residence to Albania for more than one night. Albanian clinics offer full services to all tourists, both those who travel to Tirana specifically for our dental services and those who want to benefit from our dental services together with tourist packages. Additionally, immigrant tourists are among those who travel to Albania for vacation or to visit their relatives and at the same time perform all dental services in their homeland.

Table 1 Dental Tourism Destination.

Dental Tourism Destination	Dental Implants Price
Mexico	1400€
Thailand	1866€
Spain	1635€
Turkey	858€
Hungary	1158€
Croatia	1000€
Albania	500-700€

Dental tourism in Albania was born more than 15 years ago, with the first patients who were Albanians who lived in neighboring countries and came to Albania to spend their summer vacations. Therefore, immigrants were the first Albanian patients who recommended that their foreign friends spend their holidays in Albania and at the same time perform dental treatments, saving 40% to 70% of the cost (Nexhipi, O., 2018). This makes it necessary to study the behavior of tourism consumers by various organizations and institutions since only in this way can the needs and desires of the consumer be known and satisfied, thus achieving a strong positioning compared to other competitive destinations.

With a very favorable geographical position, located in the Balkans, and in Europe, with a long coastline, with a very rich hydrography, with a coveted wealth of its natural and cultural heritage, with an aging workforce moderately new, with much cheaper prices than in other countries, and with a gastronomy that has qualified among the best in the Mediterranean area, Albania has presented itself in recent years as an excellent opportunity in Europe and beyond for the application and development of health tourism, compared to other destinations that were previously attractive, but because of the distance, it has passed second-rate preferences. Foreigners have continued to seek health services in Albania. Of course, dental tourism carries the flag (Gremi, D., 2021) for many reasons. In Albania, there is a type of tourism that has been branded and has taken shape, especially in recent years.

The dental tourism program in Albanian dental clinics offers the entire range of dental services, starting from general services to specialized ones. General services offered by dental clinics include visits and consultations, professional hygiene and cleaning, fillings, dental therapy, root canal treatments, professional whitening, aesthetic veneers and others. Specialized services in dental clinics, such as complex treatments, crowns (cases), prosthetic bridges, total prostheses, dental appliances, oral surgery, implants and others, are handled by professional doctors specializing in the respective fields. The demand for dental services is mostly nonemergency. Our experience in the dental tourism sector with the timely planning of dental services for those who travel to Albania for dental services shows that the organization is quite good and that maximally positive and pleasant results have been achieved by patients. Dental clinics, as private enterprises in the oral health sector, are determined to build a complete structure for the development of dental tourism in Albania. The mission in Albanian dental clinics is to satisfy all current patients and to motivate potential patients to travel to Albania for high-quality services with multiyear guarantees.

How does the dental tourism chain work, and what methodologies are used to attract patients?

Marketing on the web organic ranking through SEO optimization and Google advertising.

Social media marketing related to the dental clinic website.

Do not require dental consultations or visits to dentists in their target countries.

Below, you can understand why Albania is a favorite place for dental tourists:

Quality services

The highest-tech technology

Guarantee for each procedure

Comprehensive concept (All-Inclusive, hotel with meals, hotel-airport or port-clinic taxi, tourist guide)

Low cost

How does it affect the economic growth of Albania?

Unlike other countries in Albania, the chain of economic growth does not remain only within a business. In Croatia, dental services, hotels, and plane tickets are provided by a single facility, which is a dental clinic. The latter in every country of the world owns all these connections except for transport. In Albania, the chain goes from one business to another. Once the patient accepts the treatment plan, he or she waits for the plane ticket. The dental clinic has contracts with taxi companies that serve to transport patients from the airport-clinic-hotel.

On the other hand, the clinic, through the contracting of several hotels in Albania against a fee lower than the service for a simple client, offers the patient a free stay for treatment days while helping the hotel business increase income. Each patient, according to the needs of dental services, requires a set of dental materials. Most patients visit Albania for surgical intervention, so the placement of implants is the main service. In this way, the increase in the number of implant placements per clinic indicates an increase in the sale of these products by dental sales companies.

After surgery, every patient needs medication after the intervention, so dental clinics cooperate with pharmacies or direct pharmaceutical companies. Another important link in the introduction of patients to the circle of Albanian dental clinics is the specialized agencies for dental tourism, which, through their networks, enable an increase in the number of visitors to Albania. The latter enables tourist guides in places with Albanian attractions, adding another link in this chain of income distribution.

3. Materials and Methods

According to the literature, the most commonly used method for collecting data is "interviews, questionnaires, observations", which clarifies and provides suggestions as to which of the methods may be the best. After reviewing the various methods of data collection, it was decided that the best method is face-to-face interviews because they provide rich and accurate data, establish better rapport with the interviewee and collect the questionnaires immediately after they are completed, with a 100% response rate.

For the purpose of research, to cover all its aspects, both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data were collected directly from the sample used in the study for the specific purpose of the research. Secondary data collected in the past by other researchers or other entities for their purposes served us for the research in question by using them in a combined manner according to the needs of the study.

4. Results

A descriptive analysis of the data was carried out according to the five parts of the questionnaire: the first part (sociodemographic characteristics), the second part (dental factors), (quality and price of dental services), and (opinions on tourism in Albania). Descriptive analysis provides an overview of the characteristics of the sample included in the study. Based on the literature review and primary research findings, it was concluded that dental tourism is a growing and developing phenomenon that is becoming more attractive to patients due to its potential for reduced costs, increased convenience and the immediacy of treatment. The necessity of travel is the primary motivation for seeking dental treatment due to the successful cooperation between tourism and health. The level of consumer satisfaction of the participants is also explained as an element of motivation and not only for them but also as a recommendation for others. The data were analyzed with the statistical package SPSS 22. The analyses are descriptive.

Table 2 Age of the participants.

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-25	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	26-35	13	13.0	13.0	18.0
	36-45	5	5.0	5.0	23.0
	46-55	38	38.0	38.0	61.0
	56-65	12	12.0	12.0	73.0
	65 and up	27	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

According to the tables above, 77% of the interviewees were older than 46 years, and 10% of the interviewees were women who were interested in oral services. The average income of 82% of the interviewees was less than 100,000 Euros per year. It is noted that 45% are self-employed and belong to small and family businesses, and 23% are privately employed. Overall, 47% and 42% of the tourists had a secondary education, respectively. Interestingly, the main sources of information are word of mouth (42%), social media (32%), television (17%) and advertisement (9%).

Question: How did you hear about our clinic, and why did you decide to come to this clinic? Additionally, it is worth mentioning that hotel service leaves little to be desired.

Question: Why did you choose to come to Albania? Their choice is motivated by low prices, good quality and 48% warranty. An interesting finding was that 45% liked dental work advertised or performed by friends and relatives, which means that the dental tourism market is consolidating in Albania with a loyal clientele and 7% from the geographical position.

The sample we used in the study received services in implantology and prosthetics for 85% of those over 46 years old, 12% of those receiving aesthetic services and 2% of those receiving orthodontics.

Table 3 The gender of the participants.

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Female	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 The education of the participants.

		Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Secondary	47	47.0	47.0	47.0
	High	44	44.0	44.0	91.0
	Postuniversity	2	2.0	2.0	93.0
	No Education	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 Personal income per year of the participants.

		Personal income per year			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 100,000 Eur	82	82.0	82.0	82.0
	100.000-150.000 Eur	16	16.0	16.0	98.0
	150.001-200.000 Eur	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 Employment of the participants.

		Employment			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unemployed	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Self employed	45	45.0	45.0	47.0
	Employed in Public sector	15	15.0	15.0	62.0
	Employed in private sector	23	23.0	23.0	85.0
	Retired	11	11.0	11.0	96.0
	Student	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 Marketing means.

		Marketing means			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Social media	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Word-of-mouth	42	42.0	42.0	74.0
	Television	17	17.0	17.0	91.0
	Publicity	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 Type of treatment provided to the participants.

		Type of treatment			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Implantology	36	36.0	38.3	38.3
	Aesthetic	18	18.0	19.1	57.4
	Prosthetic	34	34.0	36.2	93.6
	Orthodontics	6	6.0	6.4	100.0
	Total	94	94.0	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.0		
Total		100	100.0		

The total amount spent on dental treatments in the clinic was 219,660 euros, so the average for a dental tourist was 2196.6 euros. Therefore, this tourism generates income that affects the economic development of the tourism industry. Seventy-five percent of the interviewees responded positively to the question of whether the clinic offered a package of services, specifying the type of service, accommodation, transportation, and discounts.

Table 9 Consumer satisfaction.

		Consumer Satisfaction			
Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Satisfied	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Very satisfied	98	98.0	98.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The level of satisfaction of the tourists interviewed for the service(s) received was 98% very satisfied and only 2% satisfied. The warranty given for the service(s) received in this study sample varies from 2 to 10 years along with the accompanying documentation.

Question: Does he plan to return to Albania for further treatment? General control is needed to make the part up, down, to make the teeth to see the progress of the treatment.

Question: Have you recommended the clinic to others? Yes, 100% of the respondents responded.

Question: What problems have you encountered? Those interviewed responded positively. No problem.

Question: What comments do you have about the service provided by dentists in Albania? They are friendly, humane, hospitable, professional, very kind, and communicative.

Question: Did you learn more about Albania during your visits here? Yes, 100% of those interviewed answered, respectively, that they are hospitable people and have a wonderful nature (25%), good cooking (35%), Albanian archaeology for Albanian businesses (14%), and the coast for the history of Albania (14%) for Albanian music and sports (12%). The findings show that dental services are of high quality, although they are an inexpensive option compared to what other countries can offer. Dental tourism gives patients access to professional services, equipment, technology, and modern clinics. A decrease in costs is another factor that motivates dental tourists to come to Albania. The services offered are less expensive and take less time than in the country where the patients come from, so there is no waiting time. Dentists work around the patient's schedule and not the other way around. Visiting a new place and combining it with dental services makes the whole process and trip more exciting. The necessity of travel is the primary motivation for seeking dental treatment due to the successful collaboration between tourism and health.

4. Conclusions

This research aimed to investigate why foreign (Italian) patients travel to Albania for dental care.

To answer the research question, in-depth interviews were conducted to collect information from foreign Italian patients receiving dental care in Albania.

Dental tourism is widely discussed by academics, although little qualitative research has been conducted on dental tourism in Albania.

This research contributes to filling the knowledge gap in the literature and aims to shape dentists' thinking about the future of the industry.

As shown in secondary and primary research, dental tourism has become popular over the past few decades, although primary research suggests that the development of this sector is dependent on competitors in other countries.

Primary research suggests that foreigners choose their clinic through patient-to-patient recommendations, from friends and family, and through the Internet.

In addition, primary research has shown that television commercials are also a popular method of advertising.

Similarities were found between secondary and primary research regarding withdrawal motivation factors: low cost, less waiting time, up-to-date technology, and quality treatments.

Dental tourism, as a segment of medical tourism, is experiencing rapid growth and is being studied globally.

We can say with complete conviction that dental tourism is an opportunity for Albania to improve its economy by becoming one of the most accessible countries for dental tourism.

Measuring the effects of dental tourism is difficult because the declaration of income for this type of tourism is almost nonexistent and flourishes in complete informality.

Tourist attractions, hospitality, cuisine, history, and traditions must be preserved and allowed as factors that attract dental tourists to Albania, not only for dental care.

The amount of dental treatment in the clinic for a dental tourist is 2196.6 euros, which means that this tourism generates income that affects the economic development of the country.

Dental treatment in a few days, at very favorable prices, with high-quality materials provided by qualified dentists in our clinics and together with tourist packages throughout Albania, is a competitive advantage in the dental tourism market in the region. Measuring the effects of dental tourism is difficult because the declaration of income for this type of tourism is almost nonexistent and flourishes in complete informality.

5. Recommendations

The results of this research can help doctors to better understand why foreign patients come to Albanian clinics and to focus on areas that can benefit from further improvements.

The authors recommend that the Albanian government support and evaluate the development of dental tourism as an economic process and an opportunity for the development of sustainable tourism.

Dental clinics should improve their strategic marketing to attract international customers.

For the promotion of dental tourism, it is not enough to have qualified human capital and competitive prices. Infrastructure is also important because a well-developed infrastructure increases the attractiveness of the destination.

Another recommendation would be the certification of dental clinics in terms of safety and quality of service to maintain this quality of service for foreign patients.

The Ministry of Tourism should compile a form specifically for dental tourists to highlight this very important segment of the tourism industry.

The promotion of dental tourism should come from the Ministry of Tourism itself; it should not remain a private structure. Ultimately, word of mouth (patient–patient recommendation) remains the primary method of tourist behavior in Albania.

Ethical considerations

I confirm that I have obtained all the consent required by the applicable law to publish any personal details or images of the research subjects used. I agree to provide the Multidisciplinary Science Journal with copies of the consent or evidence that such consent has been obtained if requested.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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